

# Declaration

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prompting our emigration to the New World), justice, and common kinship. Our repeated pleas to justice thus ignored, we have no choice but to separate – legally and politically – from the Mother Country. And yet we still offer them the olive branch of friendship in times of peace.

The final paragraph presents a wonderful summation to our case. Interestingly, before stating the “bottom line” inevitable conclusion for independence to which the objective analysis of the facts articulated in previous paragraphs has led us, we openly and unabashedly invoke God’s name as the ultimate authority for this undertaking – and it is His protection we invoke. The Declaration ends with a stirring commitment which sends chills down my spine to this very day: “... for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the Protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our

Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.”

The profundity of those words reverberates within me each time I read or hear them. In truth, our countrymen displayed rare courage. Hardly were they uneducated bumpkins; they knew full well the implication of affixing their signatures to this instrument – as well as the palpable consequences to themselves and their families if we lost our struggle for independence. From a purely legal perspective, these colonists had openly declared their treason against the British Crown. Had we lost the war, not only would the ringleaders at a minimum be executed, but their families would also be dispossessed of the “traitors” estates. Fully aware of these realities, these men nonetheless forged ahead. Why – when they had so very much to lose?

Perhaps the core truth can be gleaned from the last two words of the Declaration. “Sacred honor” is far more than a catchy phrase. “Sacred” is a pivotal concept because these patriots’ belief in Natural Law concepts and God’s ultimate dominion over everything was pervasive. “Honor” captures the unbending conviction that fueled

the crusade. To them, following the “right” and virtuous path was worth any sacrifice – lives and fortunes included. No matter how difficult the struggle, these heroes would stay the course – and that’s exactly why we ultimately prevailed. These core concepts formed the bedrock principles upon which our nation was founded – and sustained over the years. And they will be what continue to see us through tough times in the future. Having traveled throughout the United States in the 1830s, the French nobleman Alexis de Toqueville proclaimed to the world: “America is great because she is good; when America ceases to be good, she will cease to be great.” How true.

And so, my challenge to everyone following this Independence Day holiday is not only to reflect upon these comments, but also – more importantly – to rededicate ourselves to these most basic of “core values.” For we can only find true greatness – as individuals or as a nation – when we orient ourselves to follow the Natural Law, to stand up for the “right” principles irrespective of the personal cost, and to preserve “truth, justice, and the American Way” as our daily moral compass.